People have been talking about treating cluster headache with psychedelics for years. It's not part of the mainstream discussion, and won't be as long as it involves illegal substances that are not being broadly and enthusiastically researched. Nonetheless, the subject does involve some fascinating and encouraging possibilities for treatment, although at this point, the lack of consistent proof by clinical standards for safe and effective use is considerable. The beneficial compound central to the discussion is the naturally-occurring alkoloid tryptamine. The hormone melatonin and the neurotransmitter serotonin, both already in the human body, are tryptamines. Tryptamines are also in fungi and plants and are present in psychedelic substances. They are the basis for a family of drugs called triptans, which are used to treat headaches.

There are several different triptans, and all have somewhat different effects, depending on the drug and on the individual taking them. Sumatriptan, under the brand names Imitrex and Imigran, is commonly prescribed. There are also almotriptan -as Almogran and Axert, eletriptan -as Relpax, frovatriptan -as Frova, naratriptan -as Amerge and Naramig, rizatriptan -as Maxalt, and zolimtriptan -as Zomig. They are prescribed in various dosages by a variety of delivery methods. Similar in chemical structure are the ergot alkoloid drugs, ergotamine -as Cafergot, and dihydroergotamine -as DHE and Migranal. There are pills, dissolving tablets, nasal sprays, injections and even suppositories. One thing they all have in common is the benefit of refinement, which standardizes potency and efficacy.

Pharmaceuticals always have a higher degree of scientifically-proven safety than herbal remedies or other alternative treatments. It's part of the research process. Clinical trials also weed out reporting errors due to things like placebo effect and confirmation bias. Anecdotal information can be very positive, and a useful form of reportage, but compared to the scientific method, it is still a type of rumor, and susceptible to exaggeration.

Along with the positive results people have experienced with psychedelics, not only for treatment of cluster headache, but also many other conditions, are the medically-observed symptoms of HDDP, dissociative disorders, and psychosis. A troubling factor in decision-making when considering following a psychedelic treatment path is the frequent element of desperation in the individual's choice. This heightened psychological state often results in rash or impulsive decisions, and may increase the likelihood of behavioral or cognitive complications. At the same time, such rashness may, after the fact, even promote disregard or concealment of negative effects, whether intentional or not, which is another safety flaw in the path. There is no required standard for oversight and observation of someone employing alternative medicine.

The appropriate process for seeking and exploring medical treatment is to move from the well-known to the less-known. For the sake of conserving energy, it's important to consider the best-studied options first. Every option in mainstream healthcare should be exhausted, either by trial or financial constraint. Only when every orthodox strategy becomes a dead-end does it make sense to turn to an alternative. Anything else is a defection
from the healthcare process, which not only separates the individual seeking relief from possible success, but perhaps more profoundly, diminishes healthcare in general, because it removes a need for healthcare to evolve and better meet that need.

Even considering all this, there are times when turning to alternative medicine becomes a necessary last resort. The satisfaction in accomplishing success and the desire for validation of a chosen, beneficial alternative can urge people to share their achievements; it's a natural response. Common discussion and investigation is instructive for everyone. But to encourage others, and certainly to enable others, to follow in a path that requires very personal decisions about safety and risk is not just poor judgment, it's irresponsible.